

Amendments to the Specification

Please add the following new paragraphs immediately before the paragraph beginning at line 30 of page 8:

In general, in another aspect, the invention features a parallel reactor for simultaneously processing a plurality of reaction mixtures. The reactor comprises vessels for containing the reaction mixtures and multi-piece spindles for stirring the reaction mixtures in the vessels. Each multi-piece spindle comprises a metal upper spindle portion, a plastic stirrer comprising a shaft having a plastic core consisting of plastic and a plastic mixing blade on the shaft, and a coupling for releasably coupling the plastic stirrer to the metal upper spindle portion in a position wherein the stirrer extends down into a respective vessel. The plastic stirrer is removable from the coupling after a mixing operation to permit replacement of the stirrer.

In general, in another aspect, the invention features plastic stirrers for use in stirring reaction mixtures in a parallel reactor. The reactor comprises vessels for containing the reaction mixtures, a drive system for moving the stirrers to mix the contents of the vessels, and couplings for releasably connecting the plastic stirrers to the drive system in positions wherein the stirrers extend down into the vessels. Each plastic stirrer comprises a shaft having a plastic core consisting of plastic and a plastic mixing blade on the shaft. The shaft has a quick-connect/disconnect element thereon adapted for engagement with the coupling for releasably connecting the plastic stirrer to the drive system whereby upon completion of a mixing operation the plastic stirrer is adapted to be disconnected from the coupling and replaced by a new plastic stirrer.